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ABSTRACT

Noting that our culture has accepted some dangerous beliefs about raising children which is resulting in a generation of poorly educated, apathetic, and amoral children, this book discusses the moral development of children. Drawing on ground-breaking research and the author's years of work in schools, the book presents a program to reintroduce intellectual rigor in education, capitalize on children's native moral virtues, and stem the tide of moral relativism that now dominates schools. The program differs from both the rote traditionalist's emphasis on structure for its own sake and the progressive "child-centered" approach that avoids the rigor that children require. The book shows through vanguard studies that children are highly resilient, innately empathic, and that they thrive on the opportunity to serve others. They also crave difficult challenges, want responsibility, and seek consistent programs of discipline. The book also discusses how parents can communicate values and how they can encourage children to take on personal and social responsibility; and how teachers can present vigorous work that challenges children but that also capitalizes on their spontaneous, natural interests. The book is divided into three parts. Part 1, "The Decline," consists of three articles: "Introduction," "Growing Up the Easy Way," and "Growing Up the Hard Way." These articles compare the moral and social growth of children in the past and the present. Part 2, "The Misdirections," is comprised of two articles: "Misconception of Modern Times, I: The Elevation of Self and Derogation of the Spirit," and "Misconception of Modern Times, II: The False Oppositions." These articles discuss child development, parental roles, and parent attitudes toward the growth of children in a social and political context. Part 3, "The Response," consists of five articles: "The Natural Virtues," "A Framework of Guidance for Children's Intellectual and Moral Growth," "Parenting," "Schooling," and "Community and the Spirit of Youth." (MOK)

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